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BOOK REVIEWS

On the Civic Relations. By HENRY HOLT. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1907. Pp. 668. \$1.75 postpaid.

It would be using too mild a form of expression, probably, to speak of this book as a warmed-over edition of the author's *Talks on Politics*. The material of the earlier editions has been subjected to such a fierce heat in the writer's brain that its elemental character is quite changed. The author takes no pains to conceal his real opinion of the abilities of a very large part of "so-called civilized" mankind, especially that part that labors with its hands for a living. This contempt steams up from every page until it nearly suffocates the appetite of the expectant reader. "Stupid," "lazy," "selfish," and "ignorant" are terms that are frequently employed to describe the qualities of the common herd. Yet there is an abundance of good food in Mr. Holt's book for readers with a suitable digestion. To partake of it with any degree of comfort, though, the reader who may have something of Lincoln's faith in the good judgment, sense of justice, and innate ability of the *common people* or of Ruskin's dislike and distrust of modern economic methods in the production and distribution of wealth, needs a cool day, a palm-leaf fan, and an abundant sense of humor.

Mr. Holt divides all mankind into two parts—"men without much ability who perform the manual labor, and men with great ability who tell the others what labor to perform." The second class includes only a very small number, indeed, and to them all human progress, all wealth, all civilization is due. In the words of the author "civilization has been the work of a few prize-winners, or at least prize-seekers—the men whom the chance of private property stimulated . . . the work of individual men and not of the race—of a few able men guiding the rest. The so-called civilized man . . . the moderately evolved man, as a rule, unless a higher evolved man initiates an enterprise and gives him a chance to take part in it, cannot get his own food, clothing, and shelter, and is unable to find anything to do. The man of only average ability if he is out of a job, does not get another before the man of more than average ability offers him one. Until then he is apt to sit down and fold his hands, and complain that he has not tools and material and could not find a customer if he had. The great majority of mankind, of 'so-called civilized mankind,' at any rate, is greatly dependent, then, upon this little hierarchy of Ability. And as the members of this class get more in wages than they really produce at the expense of the few men of great ability who must be content, therefore, with a smaller share than they really produced it follows that most of 'so-called civilized mankind' must be, at best, semi-parasitic." Who are these men of great ability? The writer makes two answers that appear to be contradictory. At one time he speaks of them as "the prize-winners, or at least the prize-seekers, the men whom the chance of private property has stimulated" and as the "few men (who) have most of the ability and therefore most of the property;" and then again he says "no one man ever invented any great thing, that in each process

so many elements enter that it has taken a long time to evolve them; and that during this long time the whole civilized world has learned about them and people in all countries were apt to take the final step at about the same time—or rather a variety of steps which accomplish the results,” and “the promulgator of sound morals and the inspirers of good conduct—the good preachers and orators and writers, also create value in material things—probably more value than all other men put together. Probably if all that has been accomplished in the world by Christ, Confucius, and Gantama, not to speak of Aristotle, Bacon, and Spencer, could be blotted out tomorrow much the greater part of the value in material things would be destroyed.” Now to reconcile these two answers the good preachers and orators and writers ought to be among the wealthiest classes of today, and Christ, Confucius and Gautama ought to have been the millionaires of their times.

But while the author does not make it quite clear as to who should be included in the hierarchy of Ability he leaves no possible doubt in the reader's mind as to the other class. This includes the followers of Henry George, the socialists, the anarchists, the trades-unionists, and most of the people who voted for Bryan in 1896. “Most of the votes for cheap money,” he says, “and for all other attempts to make something out of nothing come from the ignorant and irresponsible people who are always in poverty and always ready to listen to any deceptive promise of a short-cut out of it, like socialism or communism or magical taxation, or trades-union coercion or cheap money.” The thing to do then is to cultivate ability. Do away with stupidity and laziness and this question of poverty will be settled. He evidently thinks that it will be some time before most of us are able to pay our own way, perhaps several generations. In the meantime we must do the best we can and depend upon our great Captains of Industry for the rest.

Malthus' doctrine was immensely comforting to the rich landlords of his day. It relieved them of all responsibility for the poverty and suffering that they saw about them. Nature alone was to blame. It has been immensely comforting to certain types of mind down to the present time. But now Mr. Holt has fairly beaten Malthus at his own game. The people who have great wealth are of course the people who have great ability, who have always produced more than they have consumed, while the people of little ability have reaped the benefit.

As an example of the author's one-sided way of looking at things a single case may be cited. As has already been stated, he has almost unlimited faith in the operation of the law of Supply and Demand as a means of bringing about a fair distribution of wealth. “As justice can be reached only through the natural flow of supply and demand to obstruct either by any sort of coercion is to go counter to natural law and is one of the best definitions of immorality.” Now the individualist begins to take notice. He begins to have a growing feeling of sympathy with the great writer. “Immoral is it to obstruct the operation of law?” Surely, the trust, that great arch-enemy of the law of Supply and Demand and its promoters are in for it now. But no. The writer is not thinking of the capitalistic trusts while preparing this morsel. He is on the scent of the labor union. He has disposed of the capitalistic trusts in a few mild sentences of doubtful meaning and has actually paid a pretty compliment to

the Great Father of Trusts, but it takes nearly a hundred solid pages besides numerous long paragraphs scattered throughout the entire book to fittingly set forth his ideas of the nefarious sins and practices of the wicked labor unions.

Yet it would not be quite fair to the writer to say that he can never see two sides to a question. The question as to whether the sphere of government should extend beyond national defense and the protection of rights is an open one, he says. There are wise men on both sides. "Aristotle, the first systematic writer on politics, took both sides" and the author himself finds it impossible to take a definite and final position in this matter. "The supplying of convenience by the government," he writes, "appears to be a natural evolution, being on the whole considerably further advanced in the highly evolved nations than others." In his discussion of the question he makes it plain, however, that in his opinion the United States is not far enough evolved yet to attempt very much in this direction. The advocates of government ownership and operation of public utilities would hardly agree that his discussion of this question is quite a fair one from their view-point, but they may at least find some comfort in the fact that in advocating these doctrines they do not put themselves beyond the pale of reason, common-sense, and good morals.

EDWARD E. HILL

CHICAGO NORMAL SCHOOL

L'Abbè Daniel. By ANDRÉ THEURIET. Edited with Introduction, Notes, and Vocabulary, by ROBERT L. TAYLOR. Henry Holt & Co., 1906.

A pretty story of country life in France, suitable for elementary French classes. The simplicity of style is well suited to the narrative, and the many charming descriptions of peasant scenery and life are characteristic of the work of the venerable Academician. The notes are well chosen, and the vocabulary excellent.

Le Voyage de M. Perrichon, Comédie en quatre actes. By EUGÈNE LABICHE AND EDOUARD MARTIN. Edited by I. H. B. SPIERS.

Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie, Comédie en trois actes. By EDOUARD PAILLERON. Edited by WILLIAM RALEIGH PRICE. The International Modern Language Series. Ginn & Co.

These attractive editions of two popular French comedies are intended, as the abundant notes and vocabularies indicate, for elementary classes. After the text and based upon it the editor has, in each case, added "Exercises for Composition" and "Questions for Conversation," which afford valuable material for practice in writing and speaking, thus enabling the pupil to acquire a command of the words and phrases used by the authors.

Le Tartuffe. By MOLIÈRE. Edited, with Introduction, and Notes, by JOHN E. MATZKE.

This edition of Molière's masterpiece is intended for advanced classes, and is prepared in a thorough and scholarly manner. The Introduction treats of the "Origin and Spirit of the Play," the "History of the Play," the "Sources of the Play," and the "Characters and the Play." The text is preceded by the Préface and the three Placets au Roi of Molière. The notes are exhaustive and well chosen.